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THE CRAYON.

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W. J. STILLMAN & J. DURAND, EDITORS AND PROPRIETORS.

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INTRODUCTORY.

In the midst of a great commercial crisis, while fortunes of years' growth have been falling around us, and the panic-stricken world of business has been gathering in its resources, to save what it may from wreck, an effort has been organized, having for its object the education of our countrymen to the perception and enjoyment of Beauty. And though the time seems unpropitious, we have a faith that to Beauty and its messengers, even times and seasons have a deference.

There is a little blue flower—the liver-leaf—which blossoms almost at the edge of our forest snows, springing up at the first instant of breath the earth gets after its winter-trance, and asserting, it might seem to a poetic fancy, its existence, simply by force of the beauty which it embodies. Buried fathoms deep under the snow-drift, it has still preserved its vitality, and breaks forth at the first loosening of its bonds.

So Art, which is Beauty's gospel, lies inert under the cold necessities of a national childhood, and the cares and storms of a political first existence; but when the winter of discontent is made summer, it bursts out to gladden and beautify life. Beauty, deep-rooted in every human mind, is its vitality, and it must therefore live. To us, and to our generation, it is given to determine its future in our country, whether free and healthy, or dwarfed and deformed by pride and conceit. To this glorious work of art-cultivation we have devoted this undertaking, and we hope to prove to all men that it is worthy the highest regard of all earnest minds—that the artist has a place in the heart of mankind, which you deprive him of only with the certain consequence of imperfect being for yourselves. It is fitting, then, that we should enter into action at this very crisis, when trade has shown its hollowness, and money-pride its brittleness, for after trials and sorrows come humility and love, and with these Beauty enters the heart.

In prosperity, we could have spoken words of caution, but they would have fallen into deaf ears. We could have whispered to a world rushing heedlessly along to the wreck of commerce, that there were things more gratifying to the intellect than

the accumulation of property, or the gratification of pride—that to those who reverently seek her, Beauty has an elevation of enjoyment, compared to which, all self-glorification is a hollow show—a thing which the heart crushes in embracing it. We could have taught men that Beauty is the antidote to those wearing, consuming cares of the material life—that, as trade and money being by their very nature the origin of selfish influences, and bring men for ever into struggle with each other, not for mutual advantage, but for selfish appropriation; so Beauty and Art, belonging none the less to one, because given to all, widen our sympathies and unite us by a common delight. It is bitter to those who love their race, to see men shut themselves into themselves year after year, pursuing that which can belong to themselves alone, while around them everywhere lies that which, if once taken up, is theirs for ever, and yet is not diminished for the next comer. Do men realize this? Do they think of it, or are they skeptics with regard to Beauty, as well as the future? Does the world of nature absolutely lie around them a waste desert—only so much space to be got over, where they travel with blinded eyes until all that is most glorious and instinct with immortality in them has died for want of culture? There are too many such. Could we but reach them, could we open for an instant their sealed eyes to the perception of the outer world, life would be new to them, and in the perception of the great harmonies of nature, they would become tranquilized and elevated. The more entirely delight is based on the eternal and immutable, the more enduring and unchangeable it becomes, and we doubt much if there can be found a merchant, who has found time and disposition to cultivate his love for art, who does not feel that his daily routine of duty is gone through with better, from its effect upon his mind, and who does not feel that there is something in him better than his computing capacity, and something in life more profitable than cent-per-cent profits.

Passing through one of our bye-streets late last autumn, we were preceded by a group of boys rollicking through the street, after the fashion of the candidates for Bowery distinction. Just as we reached

them their boisterous merriment was checked by the sight of a quantity of flowers—the refuse of a neighboring garden thrown out into the street. They were the commonest kinds of flowers—marigolds, &c.,—yet none the less beautiful for being common. The boys made a simultaneous rush for them, not with pushing and squabbling, as they would have done for coppers or “valuables,” but with eagerness. One, keener-eyed than the rest, secured the gems of the collection, and the disappointed gathered round him with as great an intensity of satisfaction, as though themselves had been the fortunate finders. “Oh, ain't they pretty,” in various keys burst from their *hearts*, and so, looked arm in arm, they strolled slowly down the street, still admiring, but not as before, boisterous, rowdying. Their voices were softened, and their bearing harmonized, and we lost sight of them, bettered we doubt not, if only for the moment. Yet if bettered, then better for ever.

Could we but throw more flowers in the way of earth's unfortunates, who can tell what might be done by the ever-growing, never satiated thirst for Beauty? The softened tones and quiet manner of those rude boys, passing arm in arm through the city street, their whole souls poured out on a handful of cast-away flowers, was in itself the flowering of a better seed, a Beauty which the highest sense will feel. For ourselves we revered flowers more than ever, they seemed texts dropped from the Evangel of Art.

Letters

ON LANDSCAPE PAINTING.

LETTER I.*

DEAR SIR:

I AM compelled to return an unfavorable answer to your application for admission into my studio as a pupil. Among the many instances in which I have found it necessary to return a refusal, your own case is most painful to me, on account of the earnest love of nature which you manifest, and the strong desire you have expressed to devote your whole time and energies to the study of Landscape Art. I

* The numerous applications of young artists to Mr. Durand to be admitted into his studio as pupils, has suggested to him to reply at length through THE CRAYON for the benefit of all who have been, or might be hereafter, applicants for the like privilege.—ED. CRAYON.